



Newsletter

September 2005

Dignity/Seattle Liturgy

Reminder

Liturgy is at 6:00 p.m. every 2nd Sunday: September 11, October 9
Ravenna United Methodist Church 5751-33rd Ave NE Seattle

President's Message

By Jim Weston

For the past year I have been the president of the local chapter by default. The former, then-current president suddenly resigned and someone from the Board needed to assume the position right away. I had previously been president in my own right several years ago, so I was able to step in and be familiar with the position.

This, being my last opportunity to communicate with all of you, I wanted to share a few thoughts and state my position on several issues. Contrary to my first term, this period has been marked by a serious lack of attendance and even interest in the local chapter. For the most part only those on the board appeared at the services and at any of the other activities that we had. (An exception was the annual Pride Breakfast. It was wonderful to see so many friends working and present again.)

I think that this is due to several things. One of them is the fact that we are not able to meet any longer in a Roman Catholic Church or have a Roman Catholic priest as presider (though currently we have a Jesuit-trained priest from the American Catholic Church). Many in our community feel very uncomfortable worshipping in a non-Catholic environment. Another is we don't seem to have the call or energy to do the things that we did before. In the mid-eighties, when I first joined Dignity/Seattle, we were a large and vibrant community. Many things galvanized us: gay and lesbian people were "coming out" more easily and the Church was instituting programs and ministries for us. The local chapter even sponsored the DignityUSA Convention in 1983. Shortly afterward the Vatican censored Archbishop Hunthausen, taking away most of his authority. We, along with thousands of other Catholic Washingtonians, pressured Rome so much that this action was reversed. We were all working for causes that brought us together—not the least of which was the AIDS epidemic and our own archbishop's progressive response to it in a special ministry. *(continued, page 2)*

Annual Membership Meeting

Saturday, September 24th, 5:00 p.m.
Ravenna United Methodist Church

Dignity/Seattle's Annual Membership Meeting will begin with a potluck dinner, so please bring a favorite dish to share. Your attendance is very important, since a quorum is required. The officers will give year-end reports. Ballots for the election of the 2005-2006 Board will be available at the meeting; mail-in ballots were mailed in late August.

Dignity/Vancouver BC/Dignite

Dignity/Vancouver BC 604/432-1230

Wednesday, Sept. 7th. 7:30 p.m. Liturgy at Dennis B's. 604/669-3677.

Sat-Sun, Sept. 17-18. Annual House of Delegates Meeting in Winnipeg MB.

Saturday, Sept. 24th. 7:30 p.m. Liturgy & potluck supper at Kevin & Don's. 604/874-3428.

St. Joe's Rummage Sale for Lambert House
Saturday, September 10, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
St. Joseph Church Basement, 19th & Aloha

Last year's sale for Lambert House for GLBT youth netted \$7000! Donations of saleable items are needed (but no beds, sofas, futons or similar heavy items). Volunteers are also sought to help with set-up prior to the sale and work on the day of the sale. To donate or to help, please contact Bill Caldwell at 206/320-1479 or Higinio Martinez at 206/669-4127.

No Dues Policy: Membership in Dignity/Seattle and DignityUSA is free. Join today!

President's Message
(continued from front page)

Also, we had a stable, welcoming parish church that kindly supported us and made its property available.

Things began to change, however. As time went on we were “invited to leave” this parish by order of the Archbishop—responding to orders from the Vatican some years earlier. This same, present Archbishop is perceived by many (myself included) to be a “hard-liner.” There is no special ministry for the GLBTQ community. This has been alleviated somewhat by the welcoming parishes in the area. These are happy to have us as members and try to understand and support us. This is another reason for many not attending our services—they have joined other faith communities.

Recently our Archbishop, it is rumored, indirectly informed all of the priests in the archdiocese that they are not to preside at liturgies for us at any time and at any place. In addition it is rumored, and is a pretty well established fact, that the Archbishop was at least partially the cause for the failure of the equal rights bills in the state congress. These bills, submitted time and time again, simply stated that state-wide, GLBT persons should not suffer discrimination in jobs, housing, credit, and insurance, etc.--all things that any Christian would find fair and self-evident. On top of this, the cardinals just elected a man as Pope who insulted us years ago in his letter and guidelines for us as “disordered” persons and Catholics. Many GLBT Catholics have been angered and left the Church as a result and all of this has, I’m sure, affected our membership.

Another significant factor is that Dignity has evolved from being just a liturgy-oriented, spiritual organization to one that has many parts. One is as a national, well-recognized entity that is a vehicle for education and policy for specifically Catholic, but also Christian GLBTQ persons, their friends and families. Our organization is frequently contacted by the press and others (both nationally and locally) to answer to, enlighten and address issues affecting the GLBTQ community. This is because Dignity is now a large respected organization. It has consequently taken on a public, political, advocacy role that was really inevitable from the beginning. This is threatening for some people who would prefer that it be

only an entity existing for the spiritual needs of the membership.

Coupled with this is the fact that Washington and Oregon are the two most “un-churched” states in the Union. All of this has contributed to our decline. Some of the above reasons, singly or in various mixtures, are part of where we are at today.

We on the board have given some thought as to what might bring us back to a more vital chapter. We’ve thought about organizing special events, bringing in speakers to educate us on topics that the membership could suggest, trying to reach out to those in other faiths—supporting and joining together in our common interests and work. Surely there must be other things that could be suggested, but we need to hear from you. Most of all we need people to take an interest, give us active support and work to make things happen. For the last three years, as I have previously stated, there have only been a very few at church and those same few have really done all the work to keep the chapter going. That simply has to change.

Thankfully, there are enough people to compose a local board again. They will be discouraged and maybe burnout if there is not more life in the chapter. I often think that perhaps Dignity/Seattle has served its time and accomplished its mission; that the writing is on the wall; that we will phase out. Time will tell. We are certainly heading in that direction. No matter what happens, we can take pride in the fact that we have assisted literally thousands of people, during our thirty-two years of existence, in their faith journey and often with the coming out process.

In closing I want to thank all of the board members with whom I have served for the last few years. In addition my thanks go to Leo Egashira who composes and edits our monthly *Newsletter* along with occasionally helping us with statements for the press, etc. He is always generous with his time and has been doing this work for many years now. I didn’t really want to pick up the reins and serve as president again, but it has been made easier by the dedication, input and support of the board members and Leo. We will know shortly about the viability of the chapter. I want to continue being a local member and surely a member of DignityUSA. I think that we are a force for good and mutual support. There is strength in numbers. God bless us all.

Men's spirituality book group to start in September. Come together once a month to discuss a book or author (including such works as Thomas Merton's 'Mystics and Zen Masters'; Richard Rohr's 'Everything Belongs'; John McNeill's 'Freedom, Glorious Freedom'). Open to members of all faiths. Be open to taking turns as group leader. For more information, please contact Dan.Fernandez@Avant Guild.com.

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Calendar of Events

Sept. 10	Saturday	19th Annual AIDS Walk (details below)
Sept. 10	Saturday	St. Joe's Rummage Sale (details front page)
Sept. 11	Sunday	Dignity/Seattle's Monthly Mass (details front page)
Sept. 23	Friday	Multifaith Works Wine Tasting (details below)
Sept. 24	Saturday	Dignity/Seattle Potluck & Membership Meeting (details front page)
Oct. 14	Friday	Facing the Fear of Death Seminar (details below)
Nov. 1	Tuesday	Sister Jeannine Gramick in Seattle (details next page)

19th Annual AIDS Walk

Saturday, September 10th, 8:00 a.m. - Noon
Volunteer Park, Capitol Hill, Seattle

For the first time, the 19th Annual AIDS Walk will be on Capitol Hill, starting and ending at Volunteer Park with a loop through the neighborhood and along Broadway. Registration opens at 8:00 a.m. Program and AIDS Walk will be from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Help the Lifelong AIDS Alliance raise \$600,000 to go directly to fighting HIV/AIDS in the Puget Sound area. To start or join a team, register as an individual walker, or make a donation to a walker, please go to: <http://www.aidswalk2005.org/>

Multifaith Works Wine Tasting

Friday, September 23rd at 7:00 p.m.
Museum of History and Industry
2700-24th Ave E, Seattle

Please join us at the Museum of History and Industry for the Multifaith Works Second Annual Wine Tasting. Featured wineries will include Washington's own Apex, Barnard Griffin, Chandler Reach, Hightower, Hyatt, Walla Walla, Willis Hall, Pepper Bridge, Pleasant Hill, Seven Hills, and Waterbrook.

Please bring your friends to enjoy fine wine, delicious appetizers, a silent auction, and live music while touring the museum at your leisure. Free parking is available. Proceeds benefit Multifaith Works, which provides critical services for people living with AIDS, MS or other life-threatening illnesses. Tickets are \$60 each. Advance purchase is strongly encouraged. For tickets and information, please contact Multifaith Works at 206.324.1520 x303 or info@multifaith.org. (Note: Multifaith Works is one of the main recipients of Dignity/Seattle's annual Pride Week Breakfast.)

Facing the Fear of Death

Friday, October 14th, 8:30 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.
Swedish Medical Center, Providence Campus,
500-17th Ave S, Seattle

This interactive seminar is designed to help participants face and address their fears about death, and then integrate their concept of death with contemporary spiritualities. Community members, health care professionals, spiritual leaders and volunteers are all warmly invited to attend. Keynote speaker Sheldon Solomon, Ph.D. is professor of Psychology and Interdisciplinary Studies at Skidmore College. An experimental social psychologist, Sheldon's work on death awareness has been supported by the National Science Foundation and Ernest Becker Foundation. Featured presenter, Marcus Borg, Ph.D. is Hundere Distinguished Professor of Religion and Culture at Oregon State University. John Wynn, M.D. and Jamal Rahman, M.A. will also be seminar presenters.

Registration is required: please go to: <http://www.multifaith.org/New/2005SCDseminar.pdf> for a seminar brochure and registration form. Fee before October 7th is \$65, and after October 7th, \$75. 50% refund for withdrawals before October 7th. For further information, please contact Joan Wahlmeier at 206.386.3030 x44524 or joan.wahlmeier@swedish.org. Co-sponsored by Swedish Medical Center Department of Spiritual Care, 206.386.2082, and Multifaith Works 206.324.1520.



Coming To:

Olympia, Sat. Oct. 29th

Portland, Sun. Oct 30th

Seattle, Tues. Nov. 1st

A film: In Good Conscience

Sr. Jeannine Gramick, a Catholic nun, has paid a heavy price for her 30-plus years ministry to abolish discrimination against lesbian and gay people, to promote reconciliation and dialogue between them and church hierarchy, and to amend Catholicism's hostility and neglect toward gay and lesbian Catholics. She has improved thousands of lives--healing people and families fractured by fear, misunderstanding and hate.

Ordered by the Vatican to abandon her pastoral ministry to the lesbian and gay community and then silenced by her religious order from discussing why, she responded: *"I choose not to collaborate in my own oppression by restricting a basic human right, ... To me this is a matter of conscience."*

In Good Conscience: Sister Jeannine Gramick's Journey of Faith is a remarkable cinema verite portrait tracking this gentle revolutionary as she takes on the Vatican with humility and humor. We travel with Sister Jeannine throughout the US and even to Rome, the historical seat of the Catholic Church, as she bravely continues to speak out about the injustices and discrimination faced by the GLBT community.

Showings of 90 minute film and 30 minute discussion with Sr. Jeannine Gramick in:

- **OLYMPIA:** First Christian Church, 701 Franklin St (downtown)
Saturday, October 29th, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Contact Barb Monda 360/866-1378
- **PORTLAND:** Journey/Koinonia Catholic Community at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1432 SW 13th Ave
Sunday, October 30th, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Contact Nancy Bannister 503/292-8188
- **SEATTLE:** First Baptist Church, 1111 Harvard Ave (at Seneca)
Tuesday, November 1st, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. (doors open at 6:30 p.m.)
Contact Louise McAllister 206/367-1089

Suggested offering: \$5 - \$10. No one turned away. Refreshments follow presentation.

Sponsored by: Call To Action Western Washington and The St. Joan of Arc Trust

Endorsed by: PFLAG of Seattle, PFLAG of Bellevue, PFLAG of Olympia, Multifaith Works of Seattle, Triangles of Olympia and Dignity/Seattle.